1: Tew, Mary. Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region. Ethnographic Survey of Africa, East Central Africa, Part 1, pp. 1-22. London: Published for the International African Institute by the Oxford University Press, 1950.

HRAF Copy

[The material in this source is presented by the author, a professional social anthropologist, in a succinct style, with little elaboration of detail, covering essentially all of the major aspects of Yao ethnography. Data presented relate to Yao history and foreign relations, demography, linguistics, physical environment, economic pursuits, handicrafts, agriculture, social organization and political structure, marriage, slavery, chiefs, judicial authority, religion, sorcery, initiation, birth, menstrual taboos, and burial practices. --Analyst]

Field date: No date
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-4
Processed in 1961

2: Mitchell, J. Clyde. The Yao Village: A Study in the Social Structure of a Nyasaland Tribe. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956.

Pp. xviii, 235; 9 plates; 29 tables, 7 diagrams; 2 maps; 4 appendices, bibliography, index

Yale: Nkd88. Y2. 956M

[The author, who was a Research Officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, conducted an intensive field study of the social and political structure of the Yao villages with the primary aim of making a thorough analysis of the institution of village headman in Africa. His investigations brought together a wealth of information on the origin, social status, political powers, and succession of the village headman as well as the intricate relationship between the headman and the chief. There is also information on the kinship system, family relationships, land tenure, marriage regulation, sorcery, slavery, ingroup antagonism, historical development, and the effects of cultural contacts. Much of the raw data is presented in tables, charts, and diagrams. Mitchell was Professor of African Studies at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. --Analyst]

Field date: 1946-1949 Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Analyst: Robert Lee Processed in 1961

3: Stannus, Hugh Stannus. The Wayao of Nyasaland. Harvard African Studies, Vol. 3. Pp. 229-372. Cambridge, Mass.: The African Department of the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, 1922.

Yale: Nkd74. ~~+~~H26. v. 3

[This source was written by a physician during the several years he was stationed by the British Government at Zomba in the Shire highlands of Nyasaland. The ethnographic data recorded in this work refer therefore, primarily to the Machinga Yao of that region. Comparative references are frequently made to the Anyanja people, another group living at the southern end of Lake Nyasa, which the author studied prior to his transfer to Zomba. The work covers: division and history of the Wayao, life history of the individual, initiation ceremonies, chieftainship, crime, family relations, disease, religion, material culture, economic activities and amusements. Socialization and social organization are only lightly covered. -- Analyst.]

Field date: ca. 1912
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Physician-5
Processed in 1961

4: Stannus, H. S. Notes on Some Tribes of British Central Africa. The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 40, pp. 285-335. London, 1910.

Yale: Nk10 +R81 v. 40

[This article is a summary account of various aspects of the culture of some of the tribes in the Lake Nyasa region, principally the Anyanja (Maravi). Other groups included in the account are the Yao, Ngoni and Bemba. Since the author was a doctor, there is an emphasis on topics of medical interest. Also included are descriptions of puberty ceremonies, house types, boats, and other aspects of material culture. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1909
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Doctor-5
Processed in 1961

5: Mitchell, James Clyde. The Yao of Southern Nyasaland. Africa, Vol. 19, pp. 94-100. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Yale: Bk2.10.19

[The author has attempted to show in this brief article how the position and status of the Yao village headman is dependent upon the number of people under his authority and his ability to maintain harmonious relations between the members of the village and himself. The position of the headman, is an outgrowth of the days when the Yao were slave traders and a man's prestige and status was dependent upon the number of slaves he owned. The transition of this symbol of status to that of the headman or chief is discussed at some length in this work. In addition to the above, information is also presented on the Yao "sorority groups," chiefly duties and obligations, and changes brought about in the chief's powers through the native Administration. --Analyst]

Field date: 1946-1948
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1961

6: Mitchell, James Clyde. An Estimate of Fertility in Some Yao Hamlets in Liwonde District of Southern Nyasaland. Africa, Vol. 19, pp. 293-308. London: International African Institute, 1949.

Yale: Bk2.10.19

[This study is devoted almost entirely to problems, and methods in obtaining a reasonably accurate estimate of fertility in three Yao hamlets. The major portion of the work is devoted to birth statistics (twelve tables). In addition there are incidental data pertinent to marriage and divorce, history, childbirth, and ideas about conception and sterility.

In summary the author concludes that "...the average gross reproduction-rate within the sample over the last ten years was about 2.9 while the net reproduction-rate was about 2.2."--Analyst]

Field date: 1946-1947
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1961

7: Hetherwick, Alexander. Some Animistic Beliefs Among the Yaos of British Central Africa. Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 32, pp. 89-95. London, 1902.

Yale: NK10-R81 v. 32

[This source deals with Yao religious beliefs. The author describes their ideas about the soul and life after death, ancestor worship and propitiation of dead chiefs, and their notions of the spirit forces responsible for creation. The author, a missionary was stationed in this area. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1900
Analyst: Betty Potash

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1961

8: Mitchell, James Clyde. The Political Organization of the Yao of Southern Nyasaland. African Studies, Vol. 8, pp. 141-159. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1949.

Yale: Nkd74. Af7. v. 8-9

[This source deals with the political organization among the Yao as it existed primarily under British Colonial administration. Emphasis is placed on the position of the chief in the society and the interaction between him and the native administration's political bureaucracy. The author, a professional ethnologist, gives first the cultural background of the Yao, then shows how the political structure of the society was organized prior to the coming of the Whites. This information was obtained by the author from the reports of early visitors to the area before European influence was strongly felt, and also from native informants. A discussion of the first entry of the Whites into the area and their eventual conquest of the Yao, is followed by an analysis of the present position of the Yao political

8: Mitchell, James Clyde.

system. A general summary concludes the work. --Analyst]

Field date: 1946-1947
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1961

9: Lawson, Audrey. An Outline of the Relationship Systems of the Nyanja and Yao Tribes in South Nyasaland. African Studies, Vol. 8, pp. 180-190. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1949.

Yale: Nkd74. Af7. v. 8-9

[This study, deals almost exclusively with kin relationships within the Nyanja society, (e. g., a man and his wife, grandparents and grandchildren, cousins, and siblings, both biological and classificatory), and the various kinship terms applied to these "relatives." Incidental data given in the opening pages pertain to the population of the Shiré Highlands, general differences and similarities between the Yao and Nyanja people, and some of the changes that have been brought about in each of the societies through European contacts. A brief comparative analysis of the Nyanja and Yao kinship systems, especially in regard to what the author terms matrilineal "clans," summarizes the content of this study and may be found on page 190 (A & B). --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1940
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Educator-5
Processed in 1961

10: Sanderson, Meredith. A Note on Ceremonial Purification Among the WaYao, Nyasaland. Man, Vol. 22, pp. 91-93. London: The Royal Anthropological Institute, 1922.

Yale: Nk10. M31. v. 22-23

[This brief article describes several ceremonies of the Yao, in particular those occurring at the beginning of the twelfth month (lunar), called the pyajila, and those of a purificatory nature associated with death, threatened epidemics of infectious diseases, and murder (especially by shooting). The author notes that these ceremonies are now rarely performed collectively. -- Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1920
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Physician-5
Processed in 1961

11: Sanderson, Meredith. Relationships among the Wayao. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 50, pp. 369-376. London, 1920.

Yale: Nk10 +R81 v. 50

[This is a summary article consisting mainly of a table containing the kinship terminology of the Yao, together with a short section explaining the table. The author was a medical officer attached to the Nyasaland Protectorate. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1920
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Doctor-5
Processed in 1961